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## 5. STATUTORILY REQUIRED SECTIONS

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### INTRODUCTION

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CEQA requires an EIR to address specific categories of impacts that would result from the proposed project: growth-inducing, cumulative, significant irreversible, and significant-and-unavoidable. This chapter analyzes impacts related to the Vista Oaks and Highlands Parcel A projects for these statutorily required categories.

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#### 5.1 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

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An EIR must discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth in the vicinity of the project and how that growth would, in turn, affect the surrounding environment (see CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(d)). Growth can be induced in a number of ways, including through the elimination of obstacles to growth, or through the stimulation of economic activity within the region. The discussion of the removal of obstacles to growth relates directly to the removal of infrastructure limitations or regulatory constraints that could result in growth unforeseen at the time of project approval.

Several issues must be considered when assessing the growth-inducing effects of development plans, such as the proposed projects. These include the following:

**Elimination of Obstacles to Growth:** The extent to which infrastructure capacity provided to accommodate the proposed projects would allow additional development in surrounding areas; and

**Economic Effects:** the extent to which development of the proposed projects could cause increased activity in the local or regional economy.

As of January 1, 2005, the population of the City of Rocklin was 50,494. The proposed Vista Oaks project is a tentative subdivision map to divide 93.2 acres into 100 single-family residential lots and 5 open space parcels. The Highlands Parcel A project is a tentative subdivision map to divide 30.14 acres into 20 single-family residential lots. Recent California Department of Finance estimates indicate that the number of persons per household in Rocklin is approximately 2.6. The Vista Oaks project would therefore introduce approximately 260 new residents into the Secret Ravine-Sierra Bluffs community area, which is approximately 0.5 percent of the current Rocklin population, and the Highlands Parcel A project would introduce approximately 52 new residents, or 0.1 percent of the current Rocklin population. Together, the two proposed projects would add approximately 312 residents or 0.6 percent of the existing Rocklin population to the Secret Ravine-Sierra Bluffs area.

The Vista Oaks project site is bordered by I-80 to the northwest and is surrounded by existing residential development as well as approved future residential development. The Highlands Parcel A project site is bordered by the Vista Oaks site to the west, existing residential development to the north, approved future residential development to the east, and a residential subdivision currently under construction to the south. The projects would therefore not instigate development on land that is not already designated for development because such land is not located in the project site vicinity. Furthermore, neither the Vista Oaks nor the Highlands Parcel A projects would result in the extension of public service infrastructure beyond what is required to support the proposed projects or other approved development, and would not extend on-site roadways, except to connect to neighboring existing and approved future development. In addition, the proposed projects meet the objectives set forth by the General Plan Policies concerning land use and open space, and, aside from the portions of the project sites proposed for redesignation, the projects are consistent with the General Plan land use and zoning designations for the project sites. Therefore, although the projects would increase the population of the City of Rocklin by 0.7 percent, the project would not induce substantial further growth.

Residential developments the size of the Vista Oaks and Highland Parcel A projects are not expected to cause adverse economic impacts, or increased activity in local or regional economy of any significance.

## **5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

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An EIR must discuss the “cumulative impacts” of a project when its incremental effect will be cumulatively considerable, meaning that the incremental effects of the individual project would be considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects (Section 15065(c)).

*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355 defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” This Section further states that “Individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.” “The cumulative impact from several projects is [defined as] the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.”

Section 15130(a)(3) states also that an EIR may determine that a project’s contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable, and thus not significant, if a project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.

Finally, Section 15130(b) indicates that the level of detail of the cumulative analysis need not be as great as for the project impact analyses, that it should reflect the severity of the

impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, and that it should be focused, practical, and reasonable.

To be adequate, a discussion of cumulative effects must include the following elements:

- (1) Either (a) a list of past, present and probable future projects, including, if necessary, those outside the agency's control, or (b) a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior certified EIR, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact, provided that such documents are referenced and made available for public inspection at a specified location;
- (2) A summary of the individual projects' environmental effects, with specific reference to additional information and stating where such information is available; and
- (3) A reasonable analysis of all of the relevant projects' cumulative impacts, with an examination of reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project's contribution to such effects (Section 15130(b)).

For some projects, the only feasible mitigation measures will involve the adoption of ordinances or regulations, rather than the imposition of conditions on a project-by-project basis (Section 15130(c)).

As used above, the terms "past, present and probable future projects" include existing approved, planned, or budgeted projects; projects which are currently under construction; and projects requiring an agency approval for an application which has been received at the time of NOP release. (Section 15130(b)(1)(B)(2)).

The cumulative analysis for this EIR is based on the *City of Rocklin General Plan* (1991), the *City of Rocklin General Plan EIR* (1990), and the Southeast Rocklin Circulation Element (1993). The proposed Vista Oaks and Highlands Parcel A projects, in conjunction with development in the vicinity of the project sites and within the region, would contribute to cumulative environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are analyzed in each of the technical chapters (Chapters 4.2 through 4.10) and are summarized below.

The EIR further augments the cumulative impacts discussion through its incorporation of the projects in the DKS Associates, Inc. traffic analysis, which evaluated the proposed projects on the Vista Oaks and Highlands Parcel A sites, incorporating the following proposed and approved projects:

- Granite Lakes/Quarry Ridge
- Monument Estates/Rustic Hills
- Hidden Oaks
- Sierra Valley Oaks
- Reflections

- Southside Ranch II/Rock 8
- Foxridge

Because the air quality and noise studies prepared for the project and incorporated into the EIR are based on the traffic study, the aforementioned projects are included in the air and noise analyses as well. Furthermore, it should be noted that cumulative impacts in the other technical chapters of the EIR tend to be more area-specific (as opposed to regional). Because the proposed projects contribute incrementally to these cumulative area-specific impacts, they are therefore appropriately addressed through use of the Rocklin General Plan Update EIR.

### Aesthetics

As discussed in Impact 4.3I-12 and 4.3I-13, within the larger context of development in the area, the proposed projects, in combination with other projects in the region, would result in incremental impacts to visual resources by changing undeveloped oak woodland/grassland into residential areas. Although most of the areas have been identified for development by the City of Rocklin General Plan, the alteration of undeveloped land to developed land is immitigable and the cumulative impact is therefore significant and unavoidable. Additionally, as discussed in Impact 4.3I-13, the proposed projects would contribute, in combination with other development, to increased light and glare in the region. Although the development of residential structures would not generally be considered a significant source of glare, the incremental addition of streetlights and residential lighting to an area otherwise undeveloped would be considered a cumulatively significant and unavoidable impact.

### Hydrology and Water Quality

As indicated in Impact 4.4I-5, none of the residences of the proposed projects are located within the 100-year flood plain and therefore would result in less-than-significant cumulative hydrological impacts related to the potential for localized flooding. However, development in the Dry Creek Watershed would result in increased impervious surfaces, which could increase runoff rates, thereby degrading water quality through increased sedimentation and mobilization of urban pollutants. The proposed projects could therefore result in potential cumulative impacts related to degradation of water quality, as indicated by Impact 4.4I-6. Implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.4MM-3a and 4.4MM-3b and 4.4MM-4a through 4.4MM-4c would reduce project impacts to a less-than-significant level.

### Geology

The continuing buildout of developments in the City of Rocklin and surrounding areas would be expected to increase the need for surface grading and excavation and therefore the potential for impacts related to soil erosion, unforeseen hazards, and exposure of people and property to earthquakes. However, as indicated by Impact 4.5I-8, geological hazards related to the alteration of project site topography and development of a project

site are generally project-site specific. Therefore, cumulative geological impacts associated with the development of the proposed projects would be less-than-significant.

### Biological Resources

As indicated in Impact 4.6I-14, the proposed projects, within the context of development in the region, would incrementally impact biological resources by contributing to the loss of native plant communities, wildlife habitat values, special-status species and their potential habitat, and wetland resources in the region. Although the proposed projects would be able to mitigate these impacts at the project level by implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.6MM-2 and 4.6MM4 through 4.6MM-14, the incremental loss that would result from project developments would be significant and unavoidable.

### Transportation and Circulation

As indicated in Impact 4.7I-8, because the two intersections and multiple roadway segments, which would potentially be impacted as a result from implementation of the proposed projects, are expected to operate at acceptable levels of service under cumulative conditions with or without the proposed projects, and because the project proponents would pay their fair share for roadway improvements, the proposed projects would result in a less-than-significant cumulative impact regarding increased traffic on roadway intersections and segments in the vicinity of the project sites.

### Air Quality

As indicated in Impact 4.8I-5, Placer County is currently classified as severe non-attainment for federal ozone standards. Because 643 new dwelling units could potentially be constructed in southeast Rocklin, and because multiple projects are pending in the City of Rocklin, the proposed projects' effect on air quality would contribute to significant cumulative air quality impacts. Although the implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.8MM-6 would greatly reduce air quality impacts, the projects would nevertheless contribute to a cumulative condition, which would exceed air quality standards. The impact is therefore significant and unavoidable.

### Noise

As indicated in Impact 4.9I-7, the increased traffic generated by the proposed projects would result in an incremental increase in traffic noise to the area. However, although operation of the proposed projects, in conjunction with future development in the area, could increase noise levels, the additional noise contributed to the area by the proposed projects would not be considered substantial. Furthermore, because future development in the City would not be substantially affected by project traffic, and because the increase in traffic noise associated with the proposed projects would contribute only a small amount of traffic-related noise, the projects' contribution to cumulative noise levels would be less-than-significant with compliance of applicable City plans and policies. Therefore, the proposed projects would result in a less-than-significant cumulative noise impact.

## Cultural Resources

As indicated in Impact 4.10I-5, cultural context is important when analyzing artifacts or other cultural resources. The Rocklin General Plan EIR did not find cumulative impacts to cultural resources as significant and unavoidable, and project impacts to cultural resources are mitigated to a less-than-significant level with implementation of the mitigation identified in this chapter. Therefore, the incremental loss of cultural resources resulting from the proposed project would be considered a less-than-significant impact.

## **5.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

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The State CEQA Guidelines mandate that an EIR address any significant irreversible environmental changes which would be involved if the proposed project is implemented (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.2[c]). An impact would fall into this category if any of the following occur:

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The primary and secondary impacts of a project would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g. a highway provides access to a previously remote area);
- The project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project; or
- The phasing of the proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g., the project involves a wasteful use of energy).

The proposed Vista Oaks project site consists of 93± acres, and anticipated development of the site would result in the irreversible conversion of approximately 32.3± acres of vacant land to urban use. However, approximately 60.9± acres would be preserved as public open space. The project site is currently vacant and has been designated in the General Plan for future residential and recreation/conservation uses.

The Highlands Parcel A Subdivision would divide approximately 30.14 acres into 20 single-family residential lots and four open space parcels, resulting in the irreversible conversion of approximately 7.3 acres of vacant land to urban use. However, approximately 22.9 acres would be preserved for open space.

In addition, the Vista Oaks and Highlands Parcel A projects would likely result in or contribute to the following irreversible environmental changes:

- Conversion of existing undeveloped land to suburban land uses;
- Conversion of existing habitat and irreversible loss of wildlife;
- Irreversible commitment of municipal resources to the provision of services and operations of infrastructure for future suburban development;
- Irreversible consumption of goods and services associated with the future population;

- Irreversible consumption of energy and natural resources associated with the future population; and
- Possible demand for and use of goods, services, and resources for this project to the exclusion of projects in other locations.

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(c) states that irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

#### **5.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS**

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According to CEQA Guidelines, a Draft EIR must include a description of those impacts identified as significant and unavoidable should the proposed action be implemented.<sup>1</sup> Such impacts would be considered unavoidable when it has been determined that either no mitigation, or only partial mitigation, is feasible. This section identifies significant impacts that could not be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures imposed by the City. The City of Rocklin would make the final determination of the significance of impacts and of the feasibility of mitigation measures as part of its certification action.

The project-specific significant and unavoidable impacts of the Vista Oaks and Highlands Parcel A projects are listed below:

- 4.6I-6 Short-term impacts to native oak trees.
- 4.6I-9 Impacts to natural habitat, including the loss of oak woodland and riparian woodland.
- 4.8I-2 Impacts related to construction-generated air pollutants.

The significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts are listed below:

- 4.3I-5 Cumulative impacts to visual character of the region as a result of conversion of the project site from oak woodland/grassland to residential uses.
- 4.3I-6 Cumulative impacts related to light and glare.
- 4.6I-14 Cumulative impacts related to loss of native plant communities, wildlife habitat values, special-status species and their potential habitat, and wetland resources in the region.
- 4.8I-5 Cumulative air quality impacts.



## **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup>State of California, CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(b).